

**REMARKS / ARGUMENTS**

Claims 12-17 remain pending in this application. Claims 9-11 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. New claim 17 has been added.

**Priority**

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's acknowledgment of the claim for priority and safe receipt of the priority document.

**Information Disclosure Statement**

On October 10, 2003 Applicants filed an Information Disclosure Statement. However, the Examiner has not returned an initialed copy of the PTO-1449 Form. Accordingly, Applicants request the Examiner initial and return a copy of the attached PTO-1449 Form to indicate that the documents have been considered.

**35 U.S.C. §§102 and 103**

Claims 9-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Rossin et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,069,291). Claims 9-12 and 15-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by EP1027918. Finally, claims 9-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by EP11101524. These rejections are traversed as follows.

The present invention is directed to an apparatus for treating perfluorocompounds having a perfluorocompound decomposing apparatus, an acid gas removing apparatus, a gas suction apparatus and a mist separation apparatus, as claimed. In addition, the apparatus includes a "tank for receiving one of the water and the aqueous alkaline solution from the acid gas removing apparatus and a discharging piping leading the mists separated in the mist separating apparatus to the tank are provided below the acid gas removing apparatus and the mist separating apparatus".

Neither Rossin et al nor EP '918 disclose any tank as presently claimed. In addition, EP '524 is not prior art. Specifically, Rossin et al disclose a catalytic process for the decomposition of perfluoroalkanes in the presence of an oxidizing agent and water. The acid gas contained in the discharged gas is removed by caustic scrubbing to avoid venting them into the atmosphere. However, Rossin et al are silent with respect to the tank for receiving one of the water and aqueous alkaline solution from the acid gas removing apparatus and a discharging piping leading the mists separated in the mist separating apparatus to the tank which are provided below the acid gas removing apparatus and the mist separating apparatus.

EP '918 discloses a method and apparatus for treating exhaust gases using an aeration stirring tank having an aqueous alkaline liquid and a gas-liquid contact device and/or a packed column. Organic fluorine compounds containing exhaust gases discharged from a semiconductor production device are introduced into the aeration stirring tank to remove compounds such as  $\text{BCl}_3$  and  $\text{Si}(\text{OC}_2\text{H}_5)_4$  contained

in the exhaust gases. The mists that are generated are removed within the aeration stirring tank. In order to remove ammonia, a gas-liquid content device and a demister are provided downstream of the aeration stirring tank. However, EP '918 fails to disclose the tank and discharging piping recited in claim 12.

Finally, EP '524 is not prior art since it has a publication date of May 23, 2001. The present application claims priority to JP 2001-075241, filed on March 16, 2001. A verified English translation of the Japanese application was filed in the parent application having Serial No. 09/940,984. A copy of this verified English translation is attached for the Examiner's convenience.

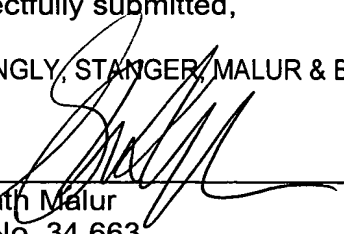
Therefore, in view of the deficiencies pointed out above with respect to the cited references, it is submitted that the pending claims patentably define the present invention over the cited art.

### **Conclusion**

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

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